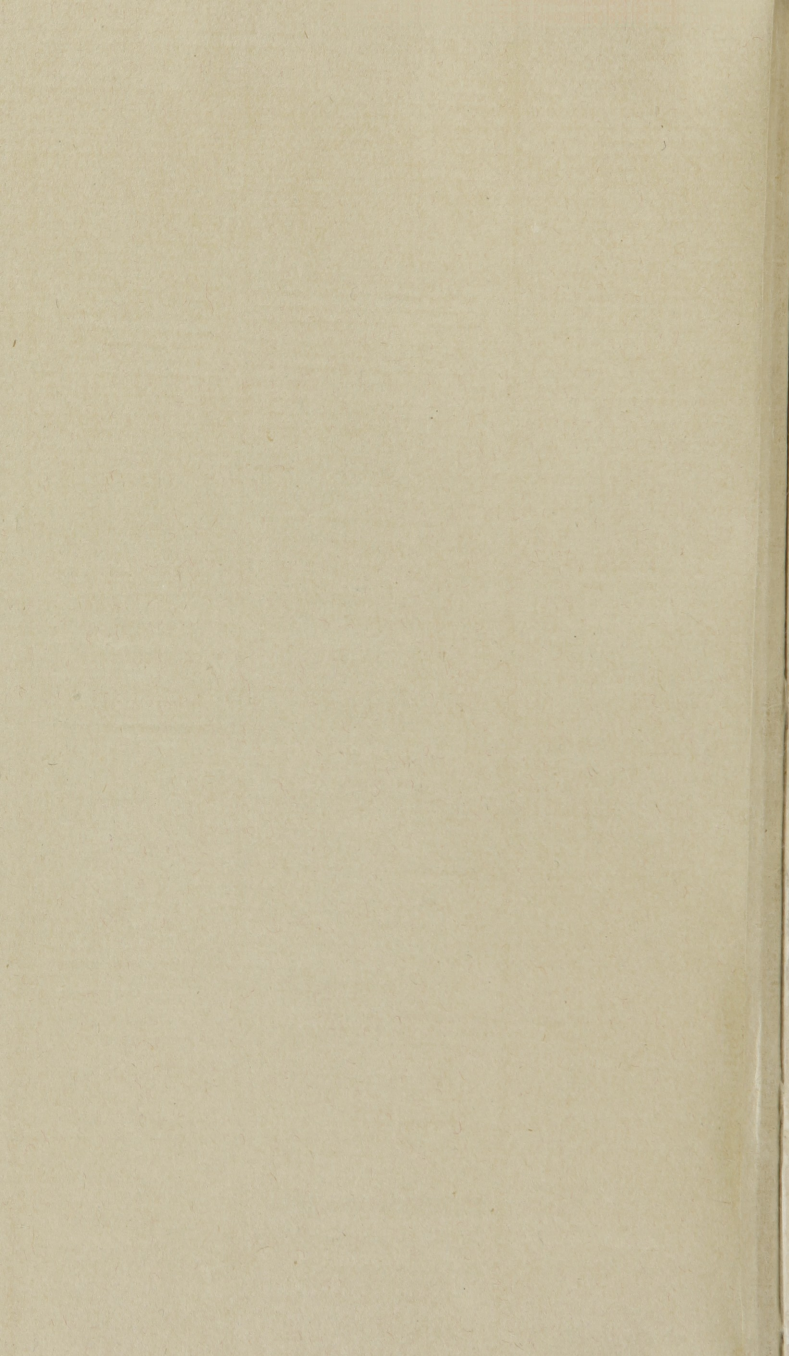


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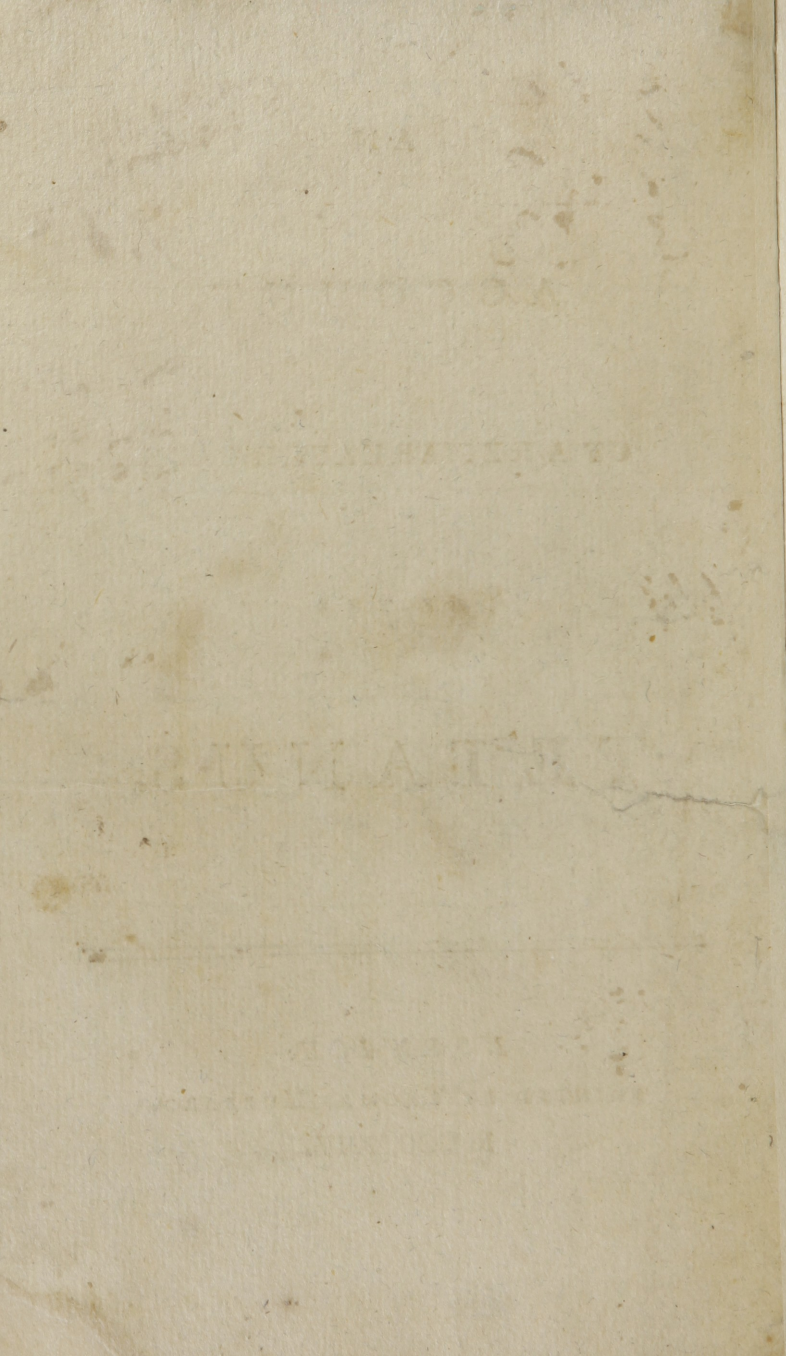
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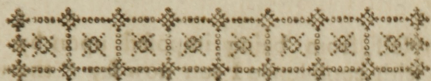


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AN
ACCOUNT
OF A REMARKABLE CASE
OF THE
TETANUS.

NORWICH:
PRINTED BY THOMAS HUBBARD.
M,DCC,XCIV.

Dec 31
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To Doctor PHILIP TURNER.

DEAR SIR,

I PRESUME you will remember my frequent conversation with you on the subject of a singular complaint which took place in my father's family. I have drawn up an account of this disorder, with the system of practice pursued, which I offer for publication, and with your leave have the honor of inscribing it to you.

SINCE every disorder must have a name, and as I consider the one in question to be the same from the beginning, for it I have made use of the term TETANUS: under this, I must comprehend a great variety of different, and seemingly contrary symptoms. If there is any other name, that will better comprehend all the symptoms which have been ranked in the train of spasmodick diseases, and some, which, I am almost willing to believe never before obtained I would gladly adopt it.

I AM sensible of the danger there is in telling *large stories*. Whatever observations may be made, I shall not be concerned while I know that I can command the testimony of a considerable number of respectable persons who were eye witnesses of most of the facts I have related. I have to regret my not having kept a regular journal of the disorder from first to last. Had I taken this step, I might, perhaps, have given a more perfect account. However, as I lived in the house with the patient during the greatest part of her illness, and, under my father, in quality of physician, was a principal attendant, it will not be doubted, that I had the best possible opportunity for observation, and most of the facts recited, were calculated indelibly to impress the mind. So far do

I think myself, from being imposed upon by imagination, that with confidence I can now say "the whole has not been told." The picture is far from being perfect, and, to make it so, is not in the power of language.

WHAT advantage will be derived from my having given a general plan of the method of cure, I shall not presume to judge. This step was hardly to be avoided, and I hope it will meet the approbation of those of the *Faculty* especially, into whose hands this mite may chance to fall.—So much of it as may have been detrimental, I hope will not be imitated when a similar occasion offers.

If the singularity of the symptoms described, a regard for the advice of friends, a desire to afford satisfaction to excited curiosity, with the prospect of some little advantage to mankind, and the ambition of transmitting to posterity a case unparalleled in history; if these are a sufficient excuse for making public the substance of the following pages, I shall need no apology.

ACCEPTING my hearty wishes for the welfare and prosperity of yourself and family, whom I shall always esteem, permit me to mention my gratitude for the repeated instances of your kindness to your

sincere friend

and Pupil,

THADDEUS CLARK.

Lebanon, April, 22, 1794.

SOME

*SOME notes are added. Tho' some
of them to Physicians may prove super-
fluous, still I hope they will not be entire-
ly useless.*

An ACCOUNT

of a remarkable case of the

TETANUS.

THE subject of this complaint was POLLY VAUGHN, a girl of seventeen, of a constitution, formerly strong and robust, too much confidence in which at a critical period of life, may have led to those imprudences, that may well perhaps be ranked among the causes of her scarcely paralleled distresses.

THE patient, at the time of her extreme illness, was a member of my father's family. She was one of the poor of the town, and, when quite young, was bound out to, and ever since till she came to live with us, had served the person by whom a consignment of her indenture was made. She was supposed to be, a "firm, hearty, well girl:" soon after she came into the family, however, she was confined by the disorder I am soon to describe.

A considerable time elapsed before the complaint discovered its real type, and we were much in the dark concerning its true character. It was at first supposed to be *wholly*, the effect of catching cold; the patient having been exposed by wetting her feet; but full conviction of the fallacy of this idea afterwards arose

ist. FROM the singularity of the symptoms, and the effect of taking cold so universally attendant on the sex not having followed.

2dly

2ly. FROM a knowledge of her former habit. Whether from inclination or what ever source, she had formerly been accustomed, to going barefooted, in cold weather, frequent wetting her feet, being out in the *snow* barefooted, for hours together and other like imprudences. The circumstances, to which many still attribute the complaint was her wetting her feet: though, comparatively she was slightly exposed to catch cold, and other things render it very improbable, that this was a principal cause: if she was "a firm hearty well girl," why was she never affected in this way before?

3ly. FROM the nature of the complaint itself. The TETANUS, is a disorder of extreme debility § in the nervous system. The causes of this debility, are, pain and irritation from the wound of a nerve or tendon: inanition from loss of blood, profuse evacuations, or causes,

§. The great exertions of which the subject of this complaint is sometimes capable, and the violent contractions of the muscles, however inexplicable on any other principle, are no objection to the truth of this position. That this disorder proceeds from debility, is evident, from the causes that precede, the inefficacy of the debilitating plan of cure, and the invigorating plan being the only successful. (See Brown's Elements of medicine.) Till within a few years, in this complaint, large evacuations were universally admitted: but later improvements in the art, and daily experience show the danger of a remedy which of itself is sufficient to produce the disease in a subject already disposed.

causes, that prevent a due restitution of the waste in the circulating mass; ¶ cold and fatigue, with other causes attendant on a military life. Unless introduced by the violent operation of one or more of these causes, it never was known to come on suddenly. As no one of these causes obtained but in a slight degree, where must we look

¶ The "causes that prevent a due restitution of the waste in the circulating mass" are fasting, too scanty a diet, indigestion, and a habit of ejecting the contents of the stomach by puking; the two last are equally consequences of induced debility. In four cases of the Tetanus which I have seen in female subjects, two were obviously produced by frequent blood letting for pains in the side and other ailments that clearly depended on debility for a considerable time fixt in the constitution. A caution for my female friends. Another case was introduced by very imprudent profuse blood letting for a slight hysterick affection brought on by catching cold, on a girl of seventeen. In all the instances except the last mentioned, the disorder, through a series of debilitating causes, and symptoms of debility, might be traced back many months, or even years. When debility is once by any means induced, perhaps, what is vulgarly called catching cold, is the most common exciting cause of the complaint; particularly in females. Another caution. Why this disorder, unless brought on by some sudden, and violent cause, obtains more frequently in the female, than male branch, of the community, is not necessary to enquire. It is remarked by some, that this disorder oftner afflicts the poorer class of people than any other: All the instances I have quoted were of this stamp; the subjects, all but one, having been bound out by the town under the character of *town's poor*. What is the reason? such, generally speaking, are less controuled by the strict rules of family discipline, especially when they arrive to years of maturity, the most critical part of life; to use a common expression, "They love to have their own ways," consequently, they are more in the way of those imprudences, and more liable to those accidents which tend to produce the complaint, and to which their situation in other respects exposes them.

look for the foundation of the complaint? must it not lie in the gradually declining state of an impaired constitution? whether this condition was produced, by the abuse of an uncommon share of bodily strength, by lifting, by hard labor, frequent exposure to wet and cold, and other habitual imprudences, is not necessary to enquire.

WHEN we came to examine into the state of the patient's health heretofore, we found,

1st. THAT she had been subject to the asthma from the eighth year of her age, which afflicted her as often as she took cold or fatigued herself beyond her strength. This affection had gradually increased upon her from its commencement, and was much more severe, and recurred more frequently the last year than formerly.

2d. DURING two or three of the years last past, her constitution shewed evident signs of derangement: these were pains in her stomach and side, slight cramps in her extremities, and other nervous complaints. The pains in her stomach and sides, had likewise from their commencement, increased in violence, and the frequency of their recurrence, and were likewise brought on by fatigue or taking cold. According to the testimony of herself and others in the house where she formerly had lived, when the paroxysms of pain in the stomach and side were most severe, she was, "time and again," teen cramped down on one side, and rolling in distress on the floor. It may be well to notice, that the symptoms generally came on in the evening. An infusion

fusion of pennyroyal or mullen blows it is said generally afforded relief and in the morning she usually went about her work ; sometimes she would continue unwell for several days.

3d. ANOTHER difficulty that attended was, frequent puking, to this she had been subject but for a few months. The affection had never been violent, & attended irregularly ; sometimes the patient being entirely free from it for the term of a fortnight, for the most part it only operated to eject the contents of the stomach after eating, which it did occasionally every day for nearly a week together. This symptom likewise grew upon her ; she perceived that her constitution was failing ; she would often express it to her associates, and say, that "something dreadful was going to be the matter with her ;" that she did not believe she should "live till she was eighteen years old."

ON the evening of the day, in which her service in the family of which she was a member, during the severity of her illness, commenced, she had an attack of the asthma.—She had been taught to call it the Phthick ; her pains, & the symptoms above mentioned not seldom recurred. She was almost every day complaining : but such had been the representation of her character in point of veracity, (whether just or unjust I need not say, let others judge) and so peculiar was the genius and disposition of the girl, that her complaints did not always gain credit, and little, or nothing was exhibited for her relief.

COMPARING this plain statement of facts, with the disorder at its first period, and afterwards, not a doubt can remain of its having existed for a long time in embryo. The germ, deeply buried, and fostered in the constitution, was just ready to burst into life, and only waited the intervention of an exciting cause.

UNFORTUNATELY, a knowledge of these things, from which, perhaps, would have followed an unequivocal diagnosis of the complaint, on which, it is possible, such treatment might have been predicated as would have arrested the disorder or rendered its progress less distressing, did not transpire early enough to afford any advantage.

THE patient, as I have said kept complaining. About the second of February 1793, she took cold. A dyspnea, pain in the head, stomach, and side; nausea, slight spasms in her fingers and toes, & hysterick symptoms followed. A gentle emetick was given, which operated kindly, and at night, an anodyne. A fortnight elapsed, during which time she seemed gradually to mend, but still required the attention of a Physician. The asthma, and pain in the side returned in the evening at intervals. The puking above mentioned, for some weeks having increased rapidly, was now grown very troublesome. The patient, apparently retained very little upon her stomach. Weak, and imprudent, after exercising herself beyond her strength, she was taken down again with redoubled violence. Pains in the primæ viæ, in the side, and various
other

other parts of the body; nausea, vomiting with little intermission, dyspnea. and delirium almost to madness obtained. During the night, by the help of an opiate, she received some rest; in the morning the delirium had subsided, but the affection of the stomach and bowels increased. From this time the disorder appeared to be fixt in the stomach and right side, and for eighteen days the nausea was so extreme, as to render impossible in a natural way the internal use of medicine, or sustenance. The disorder rapidly gains ground, and her distress becomes racking beyond expression.

SHE now complains of a burning, as from coals of fire in the right hypochondrium, her vomiting, or rather reaching to vomit, became almost incessant. The unremitting pains she endured, with various other circumstances of distress, rendered her an object truly deplorable.

THE delirium usually returned in the afternoon, and continued, with short intervals of rationality, till late in the evening. In the forepart of the day, the patient, had generally the free exercise of her mental powers, except when a delirium was brought on by severe paroxysms of pain, at which time she would often plead heartily to have her bowels taken out.

ABOUT four days after this last attack, a tumor of considerable size, attended with a strong pulsation, rose, over the right hypochondrium, the place where the pain had formerly been, and still continued the most acute: this gave rise to the alarming idea of an approaching imposthuma-
tion

mation. However, as no signs of a general inflammatory diathesis were observed, no material alteration in the method of cure was at this time thought advisable. The patient never had been let blood during her illness. Her pulse, was weak, quick, and irregular, every thing increased our perplexity.

THE pediluvia, fomentations of the side, stomach, and even of the whole body, (as a substitute to the warm bath, which in this case, in the present stage of the complaint, from peculiar circumstances was rendered impracticable) embrocations, and injections, seemed the only means of relief, and they were liberally supplied. The embrocation made use of, was a composition of camphorated spirit, oil of amber, spirit of sal ammoniac and thebaic tincture: the injections were nutritive and anodine. Such however was the irritability of the system, that the mildest efforts to procure relief, were uniformly attended with painful paroxysms of reaching and vomiting: means, were nevertheless punctually pursued, but what their success, is hard to determine.

IN this condition, with little variation, the patient continued for several succeeding days. The pulsation at the side now ceased at once, and the pains and other symptoms having subsided, she realized a few moments of delusive ease.

AN extraordinary circumstance now occurred. The patient was so well as to be setting up to have her bed made, when an alteration equally

B

sudden

sudden and surprising took place; her own expression was "I am afraid I am dying." She was instantly laid upon the bed, and notwithstanding every possible assistance was afforded, in a moment, sunk down, and was speechless.

FROM the present situation of the patient and the previous appearances, how far were we authorised to infer that this phenomenon depended upon the rupture of an imposthume? extremities cold; pulse weak, and fluttering, and almost a total suspension of the vital principle obtaining for more than five hours, scarce a ray of hope remained. She was more than once thought to be quite gone: but at last gradually revived, continued extremely feeble for several days, and about sunset, or the time at which she was first affected in this way, she had a return of this singular paroxysm: I take the liberty to call it a *syncope*.

As the last mentioned subsided, a train of symptoms, as extraordinary perhaps as any upon record, succeeded.

THE first, was a curious condition of the respiration; a condition very difficult to be described: perhaps it proceeded from a convulsive state of the muscles that subserve this function: producing deep inspirations and expirations (the latter always produced in a heart rending groan) which recurred at intervals of a minute. This symptom likewise returned periodically, and was followed with the most obstinate, completely formed fits of the Epilepsy.

THE

THE Epilepsy also, returned about sunset, and for the most part continued through the night. Sometimes, if incessant foaming at the mouth, and spastick rigidity of the whole body are pathognominick symptoms, these truly melancholy and horror striking fits, performed a rout of fourteen hours. These followed her regularly for four or five days : happy would she have been, had she seen, in this last affliction, the conclusion of her misery. Between fits, the patient was exercised with universal distress. In the forenoon the affection of her stomach and bowels obtained : in the afternoon it was not so acute : slight spasms seized the muscles of the neck, jaws, and extremities : frequent sighing and sobbing attended ; and these last, with the singular affection of the organs of respiration above related, usually ushered in an Epileptick fit.

To the Epilepsy, succeed all the horrors of the *Tetanus*, or what is vulgarly called *cramp convulsions*. Its paroxysms, the intervals of which (the affection of the stomach and bowels continuing) held forth a variety of misery rather than any positive comfort, were the most acute. The patient is still unable to swallow. The whole tribe of spasmodick symptoms as distinguished by authors under the names, || Emprosthotonos

|| EMPROSTHOTONOS. This symptom obtains when the body is rigidly bent forward. OPISTHOTONOS : in it the body is rigidly cramped backward. In the PLEUROSTHOTONOS, the body is bent sideways, the head towards the hip : Doc-

tor

prosthotonos, Opisthotonos, Pleurosthotonos. Catalepsy, Trismus ; and indeed, if I may be allowed the expression, every possible variety of spasmodick or convulsive affection were clearly exemplified on this miserable subject. So irregularly these phenomena succeeded each other, that,

for CULLEN mentions this as being a very rare occurrence. CATALEPSY. With these singular fits the patient was attended as often as fifteen or twenty times. The following description is taken from MOTHERBY'S MEDICAL DICTIONARY. " In this disorder the patient is senseless and motionless, continuing in the posture the fit attacked him in until a recovery from it. The limbs are movable by another person, but however they are disposed, the patient never alters their position until the paroxysm is at an end. He neither sees, hears, nor feels, whatever method may be used to excite the sensations. He swallows greedily all that is given him : his eyes are open and seem fixed upon some object, at the close of the fit he fetches a deep sigh and then recovers." The present instance differed considerably from the above description. The patient was not always senseless ; she sometimes heard, and knew every thing that was said and done, and when she came out of the fit would often give an account of the same, and attempt to describe her feelings when in this singular condition. She was uniformly unable to swallow, and was totally deprived of the use of every muscle, those that subserve respiration hardly to be excepted. Open her mouth, or eyes, and for ought the patient could do, they would remain open. Shut them, and she was unable to open them. The patient in these fits was not unlike an image of soft wax, which you may bend into any shape or posture, and it will preserve the condition last imposed. She has told me, that, when these fits were upon her, she was perfectly free from pain, experienced a sleepy numbness over the the whole body, and " felt in a kind of a new world." The TRISMUS is what is vulgarly called the LOCKED JAW. All these symptoms, tho' treated of by authors as distinct complaints, perhaps the CATALEPSY may be excepted, are not essentially different, and may be comprehended under the general term of TETANUS.

that, with regard to them, it is impossible to be particular. We were fully convinced that the complaint had been wholly Spasmodick from the beginning, although three respectable gentlemen of the faculty had heretofore given their opinions in favour of a local inflammation.

FROM this time for three weeks, the patient, at a time for the space of five minutes was not free from the cramp in some part of her body. While asleep, her limbs were generally so cramped as to be inflexible. Awake ; her tongue is now drawn down her throat ; again, it is protruded out of her mouth its whole length, at which time, her jaws springing together like a steeltrap, afforded a spectacle shocking to beholders. Fourteen, sixteen, and even eighteen times in a day, she was so cramped backward, that her head and feet completely met ; and, at times her feet projected beyond her head two or three inches : her toes now lapping over upon her forehead, and now curling down on the back part of her head ; the spasm then seizing the antagonist muscles, she was bent in the same proportion forwards. Sometimes an universal spasm of the external muscles taking place, the subject lay extended stiff and motionless : this circumstance usually preceded an Epileptick fit, in those irregular fits of the Epilepsy that took place after the commencement of the TETANUS. Hickupping, involuntary laughter, grinning, horrid distortions of the countenance, (the eyes rolling round in their sockets, so, as that the discolored parts were almost totally

B 2

obscured)

obscured) variegated the scene. The spasm retiring, as it were from the limbs, and fixing on the urinary passages, stomach, and appendages; a painful *Ischuria*, with the most excruciating agony ensued: she raves with madness and attempts to destroy herself.

THE fomentations, and other remedies before mentioned, continued to be applied as circumstances required. After the cramp had showed itself over the whole system in the extraordinary contractions of the muscles above mentioned, the patient still unable to swallow, a liberal use of the *unguentum ceruleum* by way of friction was admitted, from which undoubted benefit was derived; this scheme was continued for a considerable time. Four weeks have now elapsed. Some more favorable signs occur: she begins to swallow a little, but with great difficulty, and her stomach is still unable to retain the mildest substance. A faithful trial of electricity was made, and advantages far exceeding our expectations accrued. We began by exhibiting small shocks, at first, giving one or two hundred in a day, we proceeded to an indefinite number, of two, three, or four hundred, or more: increasing daily the weight of the shocks, till we had arrived to a degree, the application of which to a person in health would hardly be safe. By this simple remedy, the most obstinate paroxysms were subjected. A general giving way of the complaint was now obvious, but all, or most of the symptoms mentioned heretofore, still continued with violence.

lence. The cramp often fixes on the stomach and other internal parts. On these occasions, electricity, though sometimes, would not always procure relief; our principle dependence lay, on wrapping the patient up in blankets dipt in hot water, and applied with as much heat as could be supported.

THE Disorder continues to abate. With difficulty, the patient swallows a little Laudanum. Every opportunity to administer relief was carefully attended to, and every advantage improved with assiduity. A free use of stimulants was clearly indicated. The irritability of the *prima via* had considerably abated; but for six months, though this condition continually gave way, the patient seldom eat or drank without puking, either immediately, or soon after swallowing. A pause naturally presents itself at this place: while we rest a few moments, some observations relative to the treatment may not be amiss.

In addition to the means above related, I will now mention the use of Opium, Camphire, Wine, Ardent Spirit, Peruvian Bark, and a variety of other stimulants. Surprising quantities of Opium § were required: the only rule adopted, was

§ THE most approved modern authors agree in directing a copious use of this invaluable article for the cure of this disease. Says DOCT. CULLEN when treating on the TETANUS, "experience has taught us that opium has often proved an effectual remedy; but that to render it such, it must be given in much larger quantities than have been employed in any other case." again, it is therefore properly observed, that in Tetanick affections, as opium shows none of those effects by which

was, to give enough. A common table spoonful of Liquid Laudanum was sometimes found necessary : for the only chance of cure lay in subjecting the fits. The quantity generally required, was, from half, to two thirds of a spoonful, and this, to be given every night for three months together, and after when necessary. Pargorick Elixir was more agreeable to the patient's stomach than Laudanum ; about half a spoonful of this, with an equal quantity of Camphorated spirit, was given frequently in the day

which it may endanger life, there is little or no reason for being sparing in the exhibition of it : and it may be given, probably it should be given, as largely and as fast as the symptoms of the disease may seem to demand. (*Cullen's Practice Vol. 3 Page 298, 299*) Doctor Brown on the same subject says, " we must therefore immediately have recourse to the most powerful, and most diffusible stimuli possible, and continue their use without regard to quantity, not even that of *opium itself*, till the whole tumult of the disease is allayed." (*Elements of Medicine page 347*) " in order to the cure, opium is principally to be depended upon." (*Motherby's Medical Dictionary under TETANUS.*) These authorities would sufficiently justify the free use of Opium adopted in the present instance, even though it had proved unsuccessful : but to an unprejudiced mind, no other justification would be necessary than that which might be drawn from the effects produced. After the patient had been raised from the dead as it were beyond the most distant expectations of every one : after the most undoubted benefit of this most valuable of medicines had so conspicuously appeared ; after the most signal proof not only of the efficacy, but of the absolute necessity of its use had resulted from the consequences of repeated omissions : who would think that any through prejudice, (I cannot wish to suppose a worse motive) could be led to say that we " had killed the girl by giving her opium" and that if we were to leave off giving her
Laudanum

day time as circumstances required. With regard to spirit, gin and wine were most agreeable to the patient, and their use attended with the most benefit. These were the principal internal remedies, from which any material benefit was derived. Peruvian Bark, Cinnamon, Galangal, Snakeroot, and Valerian, were also tried alternately, both in an infusion in water and spirit. The Peruvian Bark, though so highly useful in some cases of *debility*, could not be depended upon in this ; it was often tried in the course of the complaint, and its omission, by its effects as often indicated. By bracing the stomach, diminishing its sensibility and aversion to food, for a day or two, it sometimes seemed to do good, though the condition of the stomach would not admit of its being received except in a small quantity ; but as the crampy disposition fled from the stomach, it usually fixt upon the urinary passages, and there produced an obstinate *suppressio urinæ*, the consequences of

Laudanum "she would get well." Doctor Cullen observes (First lines page 293 vol. 3) when speaking of the Tetanus ; " this disease has generally proved fatal, and this indeed may be justly supposed to be the consequence of its nature ; but as we know, that, till very lately Physicians were not well acquainted with a proper method of cure ; and that since a more proper method has been known and practiced, many have recovered from this disease : it may be therefore concluded, that the fatal tendency of its nature is not so unavoidable as has been imagined " The only reason that occurs to my mind, why this disorder has been more successfully treated by practitioners lately, than formerly, is, their leaving off the evacuant, debilitating plan of cure, and their adopting an unrefrained use of opium.

of which were painful, and sometimes dangerous to the patient.

By the first of May, the patient began to mend apace. Though the advantages of Electricity had been such, as, to subject the most obstinate fits of the cramp, alleviate the most excruciating pain, and, in one or two instances, apparently snatch the exhausted patient from the arms of death himself; seemingly, bringing her back to the world she inhabits after having past the confines of the other; at this time, this inestimable remedy proved wholly unsuccessful. Far from removing a fit, the smallest shock would produce one. In the month of June, the patient had a relapse, but soon recovered. To this accident she has been subject periodically as often as once in four weeks till the day in which I write; to the mind of a physician, the cause will readily present itself. About the middle of June the patient's fits left her totally in the day time unless brought on by some accidental occurrence. At evening, the time of the recurrence of the paroxysms from the first, they returned steadily till sometime in July. She now enjoyed a short respite, though a disposition to a recurrence of her fits remained, and evident signs marked the periods. In the months of August and September she was able to ride on horseback. The cold bath was twice or three times exhibited, and proved obviously detrimental. Less quantities of opium than what were formerly necessary are now required.

IN

IN October, for a trial, we omitted the use of Laudanum, and the patient immediately began to decline. We again had recourse to it and she recovered. The Bark was now given in substance, and was attended with the consequences formerly attached to its use.

As cold weather advanced, the patient's fits returned more frequently ; but continuing to preserve a less irritable state of her stomach, this circumstance did not cut short our expectations of her recovery. Her appetite gained ground, and, of what she took down she retained a sufficiency. In November she declined fast ; for nearly a fortnight, her fits return almost every night. She has several paroxysms of the Epilepsy. The complaint of the urinary passages mentioned more than once, is again very troublesome. She now got better, and in a few days, appeared as well as before her relapse.

DECEMBER, she continues much the same ; eats, and drinks more than she ever has since her illness. She now inclines to the dropsy. Her fits, which are principally of the Epileptick kind, return with more violence : since the middle of June, having ceased in the day time, they now came on every *evening* for eight or nine days. At this time, having an insatiable thirst, which she had but too much indulged, she bloated extremely : this accounts for the surprising quantity of water she discharged in foam from her mouth while the fits were upon her : it is a curious fact, that a quantity of water sufficient to swell the whole system, was discharged at the
mouth

mouth while she lay in her fits, and in this way was she freed from the difficulty, and was very soon as well as she had been before her relapse. Thus, according to a vulgar saying, she had her "ups and downs," the affection of her stomach continued gradually to abate, and on no account was she worse than she had been two or three months before, but the more frequent return of her fits. How *far* habit may have had a hand in producing this effect I am unable to say.

In January following nothing very material took place, except that the hydropick tendency increased, which made it necessary to exhibit one or two purges. She now relishes animal food. Her fits continue to recur occasionally: by habit, she has a foundation laid for their ready recurrence, and, happy for her, by the same law of the constitution, she is enabled to indure them with much less inconvenience, than any one from mere observation would have reason to believe. For a long time, the patient had not been attended with the Catalepsy; but, the latter end of this month, this curious symptom returned, her fits were still frequent, but moderate; the paroxysms of the cramp generally terminating in the Epilepsy, which, unless removed by art, held the patient an hour and an half. When by any means this latter symptom had been suffered to fix upon her (by proper attention we could often prevent it) the following method seldom failed of subjecting it. The patient, extended, senseless, and foaming at the mouth,

is

is totally unable to swallow. I wet her nose with Camphorated spirit, the fumes of which were blown up the nostrils with my mouth, then sprinkled her face with cold water. In a few minutes (repeating this process,) the patient would show signs of recovery. I then poured into her mouth a dose of Laudanum or Paregorick Elixir, which she would soon swallow, and waking up, she would complain bitterly of her attendants for waking her.

IN February, the girl, having arriven to the age of eighteen, left the family of my father, and went to reside with her mother, a woman who lived in indigence, and was but illy qualified to afford that assistance and support which the circumstances of her daughter required. The voice of humanity followed her, and plead in her behalf, but here I must say no more.

WHILE the patient continued steadily to mend, more especially on the latter part of July or the beginning of August, when her fits had totally left her, though a considerable degree of indisposition remained, we were flattered with the hopes of her speedy recovery to a comfortable state of health. Should any one be ready to enquire into the causes of her unexpected declension, to such, the following observations, may not be unacceptable. "As cold weather advanced, the patients fits returned more frequently." From this, other things being the same, one would be apt to consider the coming on of cold weather as no small cause

of her failure. From the known influence of genial heat, and the opposite effects of cold upon the system, knowing the condition of the constitution on which the disorder depended, with some reason may we draw this inference; and the patient's being uniformly better in the warmest and pleasantest days, and her declining in unpleasant and uncomfortable seasons, showing the great influence of the state of the air, are facts which seem to justify the conclusion. However, we must reflect, that the patient may have appeared more infirm than she really was. It is true, her fits returned oftener than formerly; but they continued a shorter term, and were much less severe. Much may be owing to the instrumentality of habit. On some accounts, particularly, the state of her stomach, the patient evidently grew better. As the affection of the stomach, was a leading symptom of the disease, high expectations were grounded on its abatement. After all, it cannot be denied but that the girl grew poorer, and "the coming on of cold weather" I would mention as one cause of her declension.

ANOTHER, and no inconsiderable cause of her declension, was the exercise of her mind; particularly, a concern relative to her future support. She was one of those unfortunate objects who are denominated *town's poor*; formerly, as I have said, had been bound out by the town, and as her minority had nearly expired, she was, in all probability, soon to fall upon the town again.

again. She was sensible of the great attention she required. Her mind, like her body, weak and irritable, was the nursery of fears and apprehensions. She used frequently to say, that, "when her time was out, she was afraid she should relapse and die," and was extremely grieved to think, "that she must go to live she knew not where, among entire strangers who were totally unacquainted with her circumstances." These, and other objects occasionally so agitated her mind as to deprive her of whole night's rest, and sometimes to such a degree as to produce a delirium. Was it *possible* for the patient to get well under these circumstances? how far it is in the power of the exercise of the mind, care, grief, anxiety, to debilitate the body, those best know who can trace the operations of the passions on the constitution. That the exercise of her mind, was, not only a cause, but a principal cause of her declension, is a position which I take to be sufficiently supported by facts. I should be happy to say that her fears were without foundation.

SHE was much pleased with the idea of living with, and being nursed by a parent, and for a considerable time after she left the family she recruited apace. Unable to restrain an insatiable thirst, which an hydropick, diathesis produced, she fell again into the dropsy, which at this time proved more troublesome than ever it had done before, the water accumulating in the thorax to that degree, as, for a number of days, to render

it

it very difficult for the patient to rest in recumbent posture. A few brisk purges removed the complaint, but the patient remained weak, and her fits returned both day and night.

SHE once more recovered and was able to walk about the neighborhood, but unfortunately she was *putting the town to cost*—some people have not too much charity—others were for having her live cheap; without any medical assistance, which she knew would be at the risque of her life—much talk was raised. These particulars would not have been mentioned, had I not been positive of the pernicious influence they possess on the mind and body of the patient. Every thing that affected her disagreeably, served to keep her down, yea more to sink her. She began to fail. Her mother grew unable to provide for and look after her; her former fears, apprehensions, anxiety of mind returned, and for a number of days she was confined to her bed, and attended day and night with severe paroxisms of the cramp and Epilepsy. Fortunately, very early in the month of April, suitable provision was made for her subsistence and comfort, the salutary effects of which soon followed. Freed from a disagreeable state of uncertainty relative to her future support in being under the care of a person every way qualified to perform the duties of his charge, her mind became calm—her fears and apprehensions disappeared and she began to recruit.

As

As a traveller in a strange land, having past o'er wild and uncultivated fields where never mortal past before, naturally looks back on the principal objects, equally new and striking that presented themselves on his way, so we, as we draw near the conclusion, will now stop for a moment to take a summary view of the leading scenes and facts to which we have been attending. Let us contemplate in miniature, the outlines of the more perfect picture. What do we see? a person exercised with the most excruciating pain; remaining *totally* for eighteen days, and for six weeks almost *wholly* without the use of drink, food, or medicine in a natural way; several times apparently breathing her last, and more than once supposed to be dead for more than a minute: by day, agonizing for months together, under unheard of fits of the cramp: by night, lying extended, stiff, motionless, and foaming at the mouth beneath the frozen hand of the Epilepsy: racked with convulsions; twisted and bent into all possible shapes and postures: cramped backward and forward in an unheard of degree for twelve, and even eighteen times in a day: now gashing her tongue between her teeth, now raving with madness and attempting to take away her life. How gratifying must it be to the author of this account to be able to say, and how pleasing to every feeling mind to hear, that the subject who indured all this, survives, and enjoys a prospect of recovery to a comfortable state of existence.

Much

Much is expected from the return of warm weather ; the influence of which, even now (April 20th) appears to be considerable. Much, also, will depend on the attention and tenderness of one, who, not through any motive of interest, has become obligated to provide for and support her.

FINIS.



Book taken apart, leaves deacidified with magnesium bicarbonate. Leaves mended, title page supported on both sides with lens tissue. Resewed with new all-rag end paper signatures & unbleached linen hinges. Rebound in quarter linen with Fabriano paper sides. February 1976.

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